

WorkMentor valorisation action.

From November 20 to 26 2013 a trip was prepared and implemented to Bulgaria. There were 2 particular reasons for this visit:

- A. The Forestry University of Sofia invited me as a speaker on (organic) agriculture education to their 2 day conference "Theory and Practise in Agriculture" in Yundola (at the research and training centre for forestry in the mountains, some 80 km away from Sofia). I prepared a presentation "The Education of Agricultural Competences or the Need for Blended Learning" focussing on the roles of the 3 partners in agricultural vocational education.
- B. In 2012 a Leonardo da Vinci TOI project was approved in Greece, the GreenBlend project (nr. 2012-1-GR1-LEO05-10049) that was never implemented. This project was aiming to set up blended learning for organic agriculture in both Greece and Bulgaria. The Bulgarian partners in this project asked to consider a new proposal only for Bulgaria.

The conference was opened by Mrs. Dr. Evgenia Achkakanova, director of the Science, Education and Innovation Directorate of the ministry of Agriculture and Food of Bulgaria, representing the Minister Prof. Dimitar Gregov. After my presentation we were introduced and when stating the reason for my visit, I was invited to visit her on Monday November 25 at the Ministry. As we already beforehand had agreed to meet with the GreenBlend partners, this meeting was rescheduled for 12 o'clock and we agreed to see Mrs. Dr. Evgenia Achkakanova at 4 in the afternoon.

Results:

- A. The presentation went rather well and generated a lot of interest in blended learning and WorkMentor. The 40 black and white handouts I had printed (only text of the colour brochure) found takers easily.
- B. On Monday November 25 we had a meeting arranged with 2 agricultural colleges (gymnasia) in Sofia [a 3rd college cancelled Monday morning as the death of a teachers' father caused a need for replacement teaching] where we discussed various topics, developments of these schools, present problems, education structure and farm placements, school farms and organic farming. We agreed to start working on a project proposal for Erasmus+ aiming at 3 developments:
 - Realisation of the profession of 'organic farmer – grower' on the list of occupations with professional qualifications. Only when listed an education can become accredited.
 - Development of some mandatory units on agro-ecology and choice units on organic agriculture production for the 4 years of agriculture vocational education.
 - Organization of placements at farms aiming at the acquisition of competences and allowing for the assessment of skills learning, thus including portfolio of evidence and WorkMentor training.
- C. A delegation of this meeting then went to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food and met for 1 hour with Mrs. Dr. Evgenia Achkakanova, director of the Science, Education and Innovation Directorate. Although rather short in the job (the directorate was re-established only 2 months before) she was very positive about the general intentions of our plans and expressed her support for any such plan that would be fitting within the education policy of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. We agreed that she would be informed on any development with respect to the project and invited to present her views and suggestions. Connecting myself with the present [French] advisor on agriculture vocational education would be initiated by Mrs. Dr. Evgenia Achkakanova.



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